

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /026 W
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R 161327 Z MAR 73
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7026
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

S E C R E T USUN 906
E X D I S
NOFORN

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, UN
SUBJ: AUSTRALIAN POSITION ON STRAITS AND ARCHIPELAGOS

REF: USUN 823, CANBERRA 1431, CANBERRA 1462

1. IN CONVERSATION WITH DELREP MOORE, 12 MARCH, AUSTRALIAN DELREP HARRY ADVISED OF RECEIPT OF INSTRUCTIONS. AT SUCH TIME AS THE ARCHIPELAGO STATES PRESENTED A PROPOSAL CONCERNING THEIR CONCEPT, THE AUSTRALIAN DEL WAS TO INDICATE SYMPATHY, BUT TAKE NO ACTION. IN ADDITION, THEY ARE WORKING ON NEW STRAITS ARTICLES WHICH WOULD PROVIDE FOR MULTILATERAL AGREEMENT ON SOME CORRIDORS IN ARCHIPELAGOS, BUT WOULD GENERALLY PERMIT FREE TRANSIT (INCLUDING SUBMERGED) ANYWHERE IN ARCHIPELAGOS EXCEPT WITHIN THREE MILES AT AN ISLAND. ARTICLES NOT YET FIRM OR REVIEWED AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL.

2. ON 14 MARCH, DISCUSSION OF SAME ISSUES WITH DELOFFS DUGGER AND AKE, AUSTRALIAN DELOFF CAPTAIN GRAY CONFIRMED THAT THERE WAS NO INTENTION TO FLOAT ARTICLES DEALING WITH STRAITS AND ARCHIPELAGOS AT THIS TIME, AND INDICATED THAT SUCH ARTICLES HAD BEEN THROUGH SEVERAL DRAFTS WITHOUT DECISION WITHIN GOVERNMENT. WITHOUT DISCUSSING DETAILS, INDICATED THEY PROVIDED FOR FREE TRANSIT FOR SHIPS AND SUBMARINES, AND OVERFLIGHT PROBABLY UNDER ICAO STANDARDS WITH CORRIDORS WHERE REQUIRED FOR SAFETY. HE SOUGHT U. S. POSITION ON CORRIDORS THROUGH INDONESIA; WHEN
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TOLD OUR INSTRUCTIONS WERE PRIMARILY TO EXPLORE, HE REPLIED THAT U. S. COULD WAIT UNTIL SANTIAGO BUT AUSTRALIA

SAW NEED TO ACT SOONER, PERHAPS THIS SUMMER. URGED THAT WE CONSIDER POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE POSITIONS IN DETAIL, AS THEY ARE ANXIOUS TO HARMONIZE POSITIONS TO AVOID ADVERSELY AFFECTING OUR NEGOTIATIONS. STATED THAT FREE TRANSIT FOR SURFACE SHIPS AND SUBMARINES ESSENTIAL BUT AUSTRALIA COULD PUT UP WITH NOTIFICATION ON BLANKET BASIS, PERHAPS SPECIFYING A CERTAIN NUMBER OF SHIPS OVER A PERIOD OF SEVERAL MONTHS. GRAY RECOGNIZED BASIC NATURE U. S. STRAITS POSITION AND UNACCEPTABILITY OF BILATERALS AS SOLUTION.

COMMENT: APPEARS TIMELY U. S. ACTIONS (SEE REFTELS) HAVE FORESTALLED ANY UNFORTUNATE INITIATIVES THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN MADE THIS SESSION, BUT CONTINUING AUSTRALIAN CO- OPERATION WILL DEPEND IN PART ON OUR EFFORTS TO SEEK A FORMULA FOR ARCHIPELAGOS WHICH MEETS THEIR NEEDS AS WELL AS OUR OWN. WE WILL CONTINUE TO EMPHASIZE THAT WE CONSIDER THE OBJECTIVE OF THE RIGHT OF FREE TRANSIT ESSENTIAL AND CAPABLE OF ACHIEVEMENT, AND BILATERALS UNSATISFACTORY AS A SOLUTION TO ARCHIPELAGO PROBLEMS.

3. IN RESPONSE TO PHILIPPINE INTRODUCTION OF ARCHIPELAGO PRINCIPLES BEFORE SUBCOMMITTEE II, 15 MARCH, AUSTRALIANS INDICATED QUOTE SYMPATHETIC INTEREST UNQUOTE AND ENDED INTERVENTION WITH STATEMENT OF NEED TO PRESERVE THE RIGHTS OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AS TO FREE TRANSIT.

4. FYI: WE HAVE LET THE AUSTRALIAN DEL KNOW THAT WE APPRECIATE THEIR WITHHOLDING AFFIRMATIVE SUPPORT FOR ARCHIPELAGO PRINCIPLES, AND PARTICULARLY APPRECIATE THEIR REFERENCE TO FREE TRANSIT RIGHTS.
PHILLIPS

NOTE BY OC/ T: EXDIS INSERTED PER SSO, MR. WRIGHT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 02 APR 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 MAR 1973
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973USUNN00906
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: USUN NEW YORK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730347/abqcdxug.tel
Line Count: 90
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: n/a
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: NOFORN
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NOFORN
Reference: USUN 823, CANBERRA 1431, CANBERRA 1462
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 OCT 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03-Oct-2001 by smithjr>; APPROVED <17-Oct-2001 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AUSTRALIAN POSITION ON STRAITS AND ARCHIPELAGOS
TAGS: PBOR, UN
To: STATE
CANBERRA
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005